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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/726,899	12/02/2003	Nigel V. Spurr	H0005871	4170

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EXAMINER

BOSWELL, CHRISTOPHER J

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3676

DATE MAILED: 06/29/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/726,899

Applicant(s)

SPURR ET AL.

Examiner

Christopher Boswell

Art Unit

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM
THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 12/2/03
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: ____

DETAILED ACTION

The numbering of claims is not in accordance with 37 CFR 1.126 which requires the original numbering of the claims to be preserved throughout the prosecution. When claims are canceled, the remaining claims must not be renumbered. When new claims are presented, they must be numbered consecutively beginning with the number next following the highest numbered claims previously presented (whether entered or not). The claims have two number 13 claims; the examiner refers to the first claim 13 as 13(a) and the second claim 13 as 13(b).

Misnumbered claims 13(b)-20 have been renumbered 14-21 (13(b)=14, 14=15, 15=16, 16=17, 17=18, 18=19, 19=20, and 20=21), in accordance with 37 CFR 1.126 all future correspondence must reflect this renumbering.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 6,474,704 to Rathmann et al.

Rathmann discloses a latch system with a latch mechanism (figure 1) having a sealed area (1) and an unsealed area (3), and a magnetic coupling mechanism (10 and 13) for coupling motion between the sealed area and the unsealed area, wherein the magnetic coupling mechanism comprises a permanent magnet (magnets within electrical motors), as in claims 1,2 and 8.

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Rathmann additionally discloses the steps of providing a latch mechanism (column 2, lines 15-29) having at least one sealed area (1) and at least one unsealed area (3) thereof and a coupling motion (column 3, lines 33-51) between the sealed area and the unsealed area utilizing a magnetic coupling mechanism (10 and 13), as in claim 14, wherein the magnetic coupling mechanism comprises a permanent magnet (magnets within electrical motors), as in claim 15.

Rathmann also discloses the magnetic coupling mechanism comprising an electromagnet (10 and 13), as in claims 3 and 16, and the latch mechanism comprises a vehicle door latch mechanism (column 1, lines 6-8) for an automobile, as in claims 4-6, 9-11, and 17-19, as well as comprising a plurality of shafts (drive shafts coupling 10 and 13 to 11 and 14, respectfully) coupled to the magnetic coupling mechanism for engaging the sealed area with the unsealed area, as in claims 7, 12-13, and 20-21.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. The following patents are cited to further show the state of the art with respect to latching mechanisms with magnetic coupling devices:

U.S. Patent Number 6,729,072 to Somnay et al., U.S. Patent Number 6,536,814 to Kachouh, U.S. Patent Number 6,361,089 to Parker, U.S. Patent Number 6,099,048 to Salmon et al., U.S. Patent Number 5,802,894 to Jahrsetz et al., U.S. Patent Number 5,577,782 to Johnson et al., U.S. Patent Number 5,490,698 to Dezso, U.S. Patent Number 4,753,465 to Dalby.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Christopher Boswell whose telephone number is (703) 305-4067.

The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30 - 5:00 M-F.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel P. Stodola can be reached on (703) 308-2686. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

CJB
June 16, 2004

John B. Wahl
Primary Ex.
AU 3676